The Builder.

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SATURDAY, APRIL 12, 1851.

WHEN we illustrated Mr. Hope's new town mansion, we gave some particulars of Piccadilly,* and alluded to the great improvements which had been made in that important thoroughfare.† There is still the same tendency; and all that has been done there since the notice in question has had the same end in view. Most of our London readers have noticed a very elegant, though *bizarre* shop front, of stone, which was put up some months ago, close to the mansion we have named. This, with its sculptured decorations, female heads within wreaths, scagliola panels in the pilasters, lamps, and plate glass, will, we have no doubt, lead to considerable improvements in our shop fronts generally, and, as one of the first of a class, is noticeable and praiseworthy.‡ Annexed we give an engraving of half of this front, for the use of which we are indebted to the editor of *The Journal of Design*.

The most important recent work in Piccadilly, however, is the reconstruction of Hertford House, which overlooks the Green Park, and forms one side of a narrow turning known as Engine-street. This mansion was formerly the Pulteney Hotel. The Emperor of Russia put up here during the visit of the allied sovereigns in 1814; and here the Duchess of Oldenburg (the Emperor Alexander's sister) introduced Prince Leopold to the Princess Charlotte.§ After various mutations it was purchased by the late Marquess of Hertford, and is now being rebuilt as a town residence for the present Marquess.

The original building was designed, we believe, by M. Novosielski, the architect of the Opera House in the Haymarket; and Sir Robert Smirke afterwards added a Grecian Doric porch. The old structure was pulled down to the underside of the windows in the ground story, and the interior, which was originally very inconvenient, has been wholly re-arranged. In our present number we give a plan of the principal floor, and a perspective view of the exterior.‖

The chief drawing-room is 57 feet long by 27 feet wide, exclusive of the bow: the other drawing-rooms are respectively 38 feet by 22 feet, 22 feet by 22 feet, and 27 feet by 22 feet, and all are 20 feet high. This suite have doors opposite to each other, and give a vista of 114 feet. Opposite to the entrance to the principal drawing-room from the grand staircase is the entrance to the Picture Gallery,—a fine apartment, 50 feet long, 25 feet wide, and 34 feet high to the crown of the vault which roofs it. The ceiling is panelled, and the light is admitted by the intermediate range of panels marked c c, which are of glass. The roof is formed by means of cast-iron elliptical ribs, spanning from side to side. The ceiling of the gallery is intended to receive a considerable amount of plaster decoration, but at present, like all the interior, it is unfinished.

This gallery is destined to contain a collection of pictures of inestimable value, and should be made fire-proof as far as practicable. It will be remembered that at the late sale at the Hague, the Marquess of Hertford purchased many of the most important and costly works. The pictures are now scattered about, so that we cannot give a list of them, but the following are some of the most important:—"Holy Family," by Rubens, bought at the sale of Mr. Higginson, in 1846, for 2,478*l.*; portrait of Vandyck, by himself; "The Alchymist," by Teniers; "An Interior," by Metzu; "Oxen in a Meadow," by Paul Potter; Several pictures by Cuyp; "City of Cologne," by Vanderleyden: "A Grand Waterfall," by Jacob Ruysdael; "A Landscape," by Hobbima, from the King of Holland's collection; "A Grand Sea View," by W. V. Velde; "Landscape, with a Herdsman," by Claude; "The Annunciation," by Murillo, from the Aquado collection; "A Lady reading," by Terburg; "Downs of Holland," by Wouvermans; "Canal, Venice," by Canaletti; "Interior," by P. de Hoogh; "Dutch Kitchen," by Metzu; "His own Portrait," by Rembrandt; two pictures by Watteau; "Repose of the Holy Family," by Murillo; "Christ giving the Keys to St. Peter," by Rubens, from the King of Holland's; portraits of Philip le Roi and his Wife, by Vandyck, also from the King of Holland's; portraits of John Pellicorn and his son, and of his wife and daughter, by Rembrandt, also from the King of Holland's; "The Sybil," by Domenichino, from Stowe; and "The Unmerciful Servant," by Rembrandt, also from Stowe, and which cost 2,300*l.* The Marquess has further a matchless collection of china and objects of art, so that we may expect Hertford-house will become one of the leading sights of London.

The dining-room is beneath the picture-gallery.

Externally, the majority of passers-by will consider that no alteration has been made in the elevation of the house, so vaguely do forms usually impress themselves. In reality,

SHOP-FRONT IN PICCADILLY.

* Evelyn, in 1653, mentions that he was a commissioner to pave the road from St. James's, north, "then a quagmire," and the ways about "Pigudello."
† Vol. VII., p. 433.
‡ Its precursor in Regent-street.
§ Head Book of London.
‖ See pp. 234 and 235.

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